

Oh No! Not Recruitment...

The single best predictor of who volunteers is if they get asked...

*Jackie Jordan-Davis
The Volunteerism Project*

Oh no...not recruitment! You have probably never felt this way about recruitment, right? Recruitment is one of the most challenging aspects of volunteer development. We often refer to recruiting human resources as “friend raising.” Indeed, if recruitment is done right and the job match is good, you are literally finding and raising a friend for the organization. Hopefully, the friend will either continue to volunteer, or be there when you need another project done in the future.

This chapter will look at some of the more important aspects of volunteer recruitment and approaches recruitment with a business “marketing” strategy. By using these techniques, you will learn how to plan a recruitment program that will meet the needs of your organization. Even more important, if you enjoy working with your organization, it will show in your attitude and others will want to join you.

Data on giving and volunteering to consider

Independent Sector²⁰ conducts annual surveys on giving and volunteering in the United States. Their findings indicate that in 1995 an estimated 93 million Americans (49% of adults 18 years of age or older) volunteered an average of 4.2 hours a week. Volunteers gave a total of 20.3 billion hours.²¹

Other interesting findings that the Independent Sector found are:

- People with higher income, educational level, occupational status and material wealth are more likely to volunteer.
- Those that come in contact with volunteers are more likely to volunteer.
- Most volunteers are recruited by their friends, relatives, or associates.
- Women are more likely to volunteer than men.
- People affiliated with a religious organization were more likely to volunteer.

OTHER INTERESTING FACTS FOUND IN VARIOUS STUDIES INDICATE THAT:

Who Tends to Be Asked to Volunteer in the General Population?

- People in religious institutions and other membership organizations
- People at their worksite
- White people
- Married people
- People with household incomes over \$20,000 per year

Who Doesn't Tend to Be Asked To Volunteer in the General Population?

- African-Americans and Hispanics
- People with household incomes under \$20,000 per year
- People who are divorced, widowed or separated
- People who are not employed or retired
- Non-members of other voluntary organizations

However

- Blacks who did volunteer gave 4.5 hours per week
- Hispanics are more than four times as likely to volunteer when asked
- Young people are over five times more likely to volunteer when asked

Data can change from one study to another and caution should be used when evaluating data for your volunteer program. If you have the resources (or can get a research volunteer), you may want to initiate your own study to determine the volunteer and non volunteer profiles within your own community. This information would be useful in planning for recruitment and how to design volunteer positions.

Volunteer Job Position Design

Believe it or not, job design has a lot to do with recruiting. Even though many volunteers become committed to an organization's cause and would do even menial labor to be involved, creative job design that utilizes volunteers talents goes a long way in assuring more commitment and positive outcomes.

Job design is an ongoing dynamic process that should match the organizational needs with the skills and desires of the volunteer. Because of the current trends and demographics of volunteering as discussed in Chapter Three, it is more important than ever to be innovative, flexible and sophisticated in designing volunteer positions today.

The best place to start is by looking at your organizational needs and deciding how a volunteer could possibly meet that need. Look at these needs from a multi-faceted perspective, i.e., time (will the assignment take an hour or a month), skills (what skills will be necessary for the position), diversity (could a student, senior, or culture-specific person fit the job), or formality (is this a one-time assignment or will this position be a defined role).

The more diverse your job assignments are, the easier it will be to recruit. As you read through the other chapters in this handbook and assess your community, you may want to adjust the volunteer assignments. If you are a smaller nonprofit without staff, you will have more diverse needs, whereas if you have staff in place, you will also have to consider them when making assignments. However, do not let the staff needs be the sole driving force behind volunteer positions. The secret is to balance the challenge of meaningful tasks needed by the organization with meeting the motivational needs of the volunteer. You will learn more about motivation and commitment in Chapter Six.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR CREATIVE VOLUNTEER POSITION/JOB DESIGN

- * Have jobs that address all aspects of time, i.e. one time projects, assignments to be performed at the same time once a week, leadership positions that are flexible in time, consulting positions, “on call” roles etc.
- * Consider clumping assignments together for a family or group as well as assignments one volunteer can do. Often a job is too big for one person and “job sharing” works for them.
- * Consider positions for all types of personality (Chapter Seven) and design for those who like thinking/planning work, leadership positions, or affiliation with other people.
- * Consider where the work can be done. Design some jobs that can be done at a volunteer’s home or office, as well as those needing staff or other supervision.
- * Create positions that require skills ranging from specific to general. Some people enjoy doing things that are different from their careers.
- * Consider positions that will include diversity.

Use the chart at the end of this chapter to help brainstorm some job design possibilities within your organization. Use the worksheets from Chapters Three and Four to generate ideas, only getting even more specific on this worksheet.

Remember that being flexible doesn’t mean that you can’t be organized and prepared before you go out and recruit. Taking the time to go through this process of analyzing your organizational needs and all the innovative ways to meet them with volunteers will prepare you to think in terms of possibilities and make recruitment that much easier. You will be better prepared to meet the needs of the volunteer. People who volunteer their time want to feel that they really do contribute something. Good job design will enhance that feeling.

Targeted Recruitment

When you have assessed the needed positions within an organization, you can then assign a possible “targeted” person or group of people for the job. For example, if you need someone to serve as a treasurer for your arts group, consider someone such as an accountant or banker to target. If you need a person to run the theatre productions, a possible recruit would be a retired performing arts professor. A group assignment such as an event may trigger looking at an ethnic community that enjoys working collectively.

Targeted recruitment requires shaping the recruitment message and technique for that particular person or group. The best recruiters would be people from the particular group. For instance, if you have an assignment that would work well as a corporate project, asking a corporate retiree who could take the professional approach necessary would be the best recruitment route. Examine all the factors that need to be used to tap into the targeted resources.

RESOURCE FILE

It is always advisable to keep a database or resource file with possible contacts. This can include friends and social contacts of members of the board, groups you have worked with in the past, people who have expressed an interest in volunteering when a position was not available and key prospective volunteers.²² If your community is small, this is a good place to list many of the people you and the board know personally and tracking of their skills and interests. Just as in fundraising, in “friendraising” we always emphasize the need for three components, *Link*, *Interest*, and *Ability*. There should be a possible *link* to the organization either with a member of the board, existing staff or volunteers, or other contact person. The person should have an *interest* in your organization’s mission, such as a regular attendee at your concert series. Finally, the person should have the *ability* to carry out the volunteer responsibilities. If these three components are there, this person or group should be in your resource file and the target of a future recruitment.

Creating an organizational image

Just who are you anyway, and why would I want to volunteer for your organization? These are questions that need to be addressed for successful recruiting in your community. Often the image the organization portrays reflects the value people place on the organization and affects the ability to recruit. The best way to determine this is to ask two important questions: Is your recruiting problem a symptom of something more serious (such as your image)? Or would people support your mission and volunteer if your outreach efforts improved?²³

Susan Ellis²⁴ establishes a strong connection between your public relations and volunteer recruitment. She states that, “unless you are on the staff of one of the groups we call ‘household names’ (such as Girl Scouts, the YMCA, or the Red Cross), never assume that the public is aware of your existence.” Creating a public image that clearly portrays your organization and its mission allows you to target your recruitment to those who would want to be associated with you and feel comfortable working in the organization, i.e., those whose values will easily align with the organization’s mission and goals.

Before going to extensive effort to design your volunteer recruitment plan, take some time to answer these questions:

- What does your current public relations look like? Have you established a good rapport with the media? Are PSAs currently run? Are event press releases sent out?
- Has the organization had any publicity lately? Has this publicity helped or hindered your image?
- When people visit your organization, are they greeted by friendly people? What does the physical environment tell them about you?
- Do you ever publicly thank the people who volunteer for your organization or publicize what they do for you?
- Do people only hear from you when your organization needs something?
- What do your publications look like? Do they invite people to volunteer if they are interested? Do they ever mention that volunteers contribute to the organization?
- What is the demographic make-up of your staff and volunteers? Do you represent the diversity within your community?

Recruitment Options

After you have taken the time to design job position possibilities, begin a resource file and consider the image you are creating; you can begin looking at possible recruitment technique options. Consider the options given in *The Volunteer Recruitment Book* by Susan J. Ellis, a well known volunteer author and consultant.²⁵ (See box on next page)

Even though each of these options are viable and have been used with much success in many organizations, this handbook will focus only on two of these options for discussion: One-to-one and modern technology.

One-to-one approach

Most people volunteer because someone they know asked them!! Quite often it is the enthusiasm of the person asking that creates the interest in the person being recruited. When recruiting one-to-one, remember some important factors that contribute greatly to a good position match. Some of these have already been mentioned, but are important enough to reconsider.

Factors to Consider when Recruiting One-to-One

- Remember three important keys to successful 'friend raising' include *link, interest and ability*.
- Link people quickly to a specific personal contact or project.
- Match the right person to the right job. Focused recruitment is important in today's changing volunteer world. Organizations are finding focused recruitment reaps more motivated and committed volunteers.
- Be honest about the job requirements. Offer a detailed description of the job or project, how much time it will take, when and where they can do it.
- Discuss with the prospective volunteer the benefits of accepting the position or the project. This will help in identifying what the volunteer may want to try or learn as well as identifying what they may offer in their skills or credentials.
- Fully answer the prospective volunteers questions. Demonstrate interest in their concerns about the position.
- Do your homework. Don't forget to use your diversity analysis worksheet to target a more diverse audience.
- Don't set up expectations that can't be delivered. Promises not kept creates resentment in people.
- Understand the motivational needs of your prospective volunteers. Sometimes by listening to them you can discover some of these. Chapter

Recruiting Technique Options

Mass Media

- Television and radio
- Newspapers
- Billboards

Special Circulation publications

Public Speaking

- Organized and random groups
- Speakers bureau

Slide shows and videotapes

Booths and exhibits

- Volunteer fairs

Direct mail

Referrals

Registering everywhere

Special events

- Piggy backing
- Creating events

One-to-one

Modern technology

- 800 numbers
- Computer bulletin boards
- Fax

Printed materials

- Brochures, flyers, posters, inserts

Six will discuss this issue further. An example of a motivational approach would be to offer a student a job that would explore a possible future career or would fulfill a school requirement.

Modern Technology and Recruitment

...the most important qualification for becoming a recruiter is the ability to convey genuine commitment: as I have said before, sincerity wins out over technique every time...

Susan J. Ellis

Some of the most dramatic changes in the business world today are driven by emerging technology. This new technology will definitely have an impact on volunteer recruitment. Consider how technology has changed the speed and efficiency of a mass mailing or creation of an in-house brochure. These improvements will only escalate with the emergence of more efficient technology. One of the most potentially beneficial recruitment technologies is the ability to use the internet. Websites provide a new way people can connect to an organization. The possibilities within this area are endless. In the reference section, we have listed the Utah Nonprofits Association (UNA)²⁶ as a possible resource for your organization. The UNA is currently working on a project for its members that will include a website where people who want to give time, money and/or resources can go to select the organization that fits their giving needs. This website will have a space for member organizations to advertise volunteer positions, upcoming projects, skills needed, etc. A profile of the organization's mission and accomplishments will also be included.

This is only one example of new technological directions in volunteerism. With this technology will come new skills needed from volunteers and staff. Including these issues in your overall recruitment plans will be well worth your consideration.

Broaden Your Horizon

Many articles appear in volunteer journals and publications about ways of approaching recruitment. Shelley Robertson, Director of Community Involvement at Heart of Florida United Way, wrote an excellent article on *10 Ways to Broaden Your Horizon*²⁷. She asked her advisory committee to brainstorm ways their community's demographic and economic trends affected their mission and then identify new groups to target and ways to reach them. These are the 10 ways they came up with:

1. Civic Organizations

They use presentations to local chambers of commerce and professional clubs to promote volunteerism and the nonprofit community. These presentations will often yield several volunteers.

2. Leadership Programs

Their United Way helps plan and facilitate the health and human service component of the Chamber of Commerce training programs. They have also approached the local university about contributing to its student leadership program.

3. City and County Resources

In their community, the city and county governments allow them opportunities to promote volunteerism through town meetings, targeted community initiatives and other municipal efforts.

4. Articles

About once a month, they submit articles to local newspapers and magazines. In addition to writing about their activities and leadership programs, they write about family volunteering and the benefits of volunteer programs for corporations.

5. Networking

Any time they see an opportunity to meet a group of people who are potential volunteers, they are there. For example, when recruiting mentors for a Learn and Serve project, they went to a luncheon where the Commissioner of Education was speaking.

6. Volunteer Fairs

To get their message to people at the grass-roots level, they have set up their display at community-wide and neighborhood fairs, corporate fairs and at the local university and community colleges. To make contact with potential volunteers, they recommend that you be very outgoing and initiate conversations.

7. Television and Radio

They get several calls a week from being on a Sunday morning radio program.

8. Internal Resources

They promote volunteerism consistently through multiple channels such as a page in a newsletter for readership of the Heart of Florida United Way.

9. Web Page

Their local government includes their volunteer information on their web page. They are also on the United Way web page and often corporations put

them on their web page. They are continuing to expand their links with other web sites and get volunteer information placed on any community focused pages.

10. Corporations

They use broadcast fax to send a list of 60 volunteer opportunities biweekly to corporations for use in their internal newsletters. They also develop partnerships with the community relations departments of local corporations and feed them volunteer opportunities monthly.

Even though these ideas were generated with the United Way mission in mind, as you read through these, you may be able to easily identify areas that your organization could apply to your recruitment program. Use these and the other ideas in the following worksheets to help you generate your own recruitment plan. Additional recommended resources on recruitment are listed in the reference section at the end of the handbook.

Volunteer Job Position/Project Design Worksheet

Job/Project Title	<i>Art in the Park Coordinator</i>
--------------------------	------------------------------------

Reason/s for the job position or project	To plan and implement the "Art in the Park" summer series
Responsibilities required for the job/project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan series and draw up schedule of performances 2. Oversee venue preparation/technical requirements 3. Supervise "Art in Park" committee
Skills, knowledge, etc. needed for job/project	Good organizational skills, performance presenting skills, enthusiasm, friendly attitude
Time commitment needed	<p>Oct-May: 4-6 hours a week in preparation and planning</p> <p>May-Sept: every Thurs and Sat from 4-8 pm</p>
Time definitions (flex time, night, day hours, short-term, long term etc)	<p>Oct-May -- may work flex time, at home or in recreation office, day or night hours</p> <p>Position is for at least one season, preferably two</p>
Training/Support needed for position/project	<p>Presenting conference attendance every August</p> <p>Recreation dept.. office/computer use</p> <p>Leadership training in-house</p>
Group assignment/job share possibilities	<p>Good job share possibilities, could have one person help on Tuesday and one on Saturdays</p> <p>Oct-Dec, job share planning and scheduling</p>
Possible recruitment targets (include diversity possibilities)	<p>YWCA Latino attendees who help with their recreation program</p> <p>Senior Program advisor who is looking for a new position</p> <p>Retired Community theatre director</p>
Recruitment contact person/approach	<p>Current presenting coordinator who lives down the street from the retired director, Julie's Aunt (belongs to Latino community), Advertise in Senior Program newsletter</p>

Volunteer Job Position/Project Design Worksheet

Job/Project Title	
Reason/s for the job position or	

project	
Responsibilities required for the job/project	
Skills, knowledge, personality needed for job/project	
Time commitment needed	
Time definitions (flex time, night, day hours, short- term, long term etc)	
Training/Support needed for position/project	
Group assignment/job share possibilities	
Possible recruitment targets (include diversity possibilities)	
Recruitment contact person/approach	

Volunteer Recruitment Plan

Position/Project Needed	Targeted Person/Group	Recruitment Options	Recruiting Assignments
		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

